(a) whether it is a fact that due to overbookings by Air India passengers having confirmed tickets have to be offloaded many times:

(b) if so. the details thereof; and

(c) what steps have been taken by Government to avoid such situation and organise it properly?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) to (c) In keeping with international airline's practice. Air India overbooks flights to ensure they operate to optimum capacity. At times, however, passengers having confirmed tickets are offloaded which is a risk that has to be taken by any airline. Such passengers are given top most priority, all arrangements are made by Air India for their boarding and lodging and they are accepted on the next flight. Air India has recently implemented an automated revenue management system which stores historical data on flight performance and recommends optimal overbooking levels using sophisticated, statistical techniques. Moreover, in the peak season, extra flights are allowed by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation.

Increase in airfares

† 2285. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are contemplating to increase air fares:

(b) if so. the reasons therefor; and

(c) what percentage of increase in air fares is likely to be made?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) to (c) Indian Airlines has, with the approval of the Government adopted a Flexible Fare Policy w. e. f. 25th May. 2001. The Flexible Fare Policy enables Indian Airlines to consider fare variations (increase or decrease) on * sector to sector' and 'season to season' basis depending on a variety of factors including market size / share, price sensitivity and other market related factors. With the Flexi Fare Policy an endeavour has been made to make the fares market based.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.